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6 February 1970

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, COMIREX

SUBJECT: Rapid Readout and Reporting of Imagery for Warning and Indications Intelligence Purposes

REFERENCES: 1. COMIREX M-80, 2 Oct 69, Para IV, Subject as above,
2. COMIREX D-13.7/7, 1 Oct 69, with attachments 1 & 2

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1. This memorandum is in response to your request that the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) and the National Indications Center (NIC) provide your Committee with a description of photo-derived information which is considered warning-indication related, and procedures to be followed in reporting out such items on a priority basis. The memorandum includes a list of indicators for imagery interpretation, and a list of targets related to warning and indications intelligence. It summarizes the steps taken by NPIC and NIC in reviewing and revising their procedures to ensure that NPIC's imagery exploitation effort is responsive to the warning and indications requirements of the NIC and other USIB intelligence activities.

2. Imagery exploitation is responsive to warnings and indications needs through several approaches. NPIC and the COMIREX collection targeting mechanism are alert to current situations with possible indications implications. Also, through systematic sampling and observation, NPIC scans routine activities for signs of a change in intentions or lack thereof.

3. COMIREX requirements for first-phase exploitation,¹ supplemented by the informal guidance received from CIA, DIA and other intelligence organizations, provide guidance on warning and indications intelligence needs. The NIC and Watch Committee also provide informal guidance through personal contact with the NPIC liaison representative. This guidance will be confirmed in writing in order to reduce possibilities of oversight and misunderstanding.

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4. Besides reacting to specific mission-by-mission guidance, NPIC interpreters attempt to maintain comprehensive awareness of warning and indications intelligence needs. However, no list of general indicators specifically designed for imagery interpretation has existed. NIC and NPIC have therefore extracted from the USIB General Indicator List² those requirements which may be satisfied from imagery. The resulting list, called the Indicator List for Imagery Interpretation (Attachment 1) will be reviewed and updated periodically.

5. Turning to the second aspect of warning and indications intelligence, routine, systematic sampling of Soviet and Chinese Communist activities is essential to ensure that the intelligence community does not overlook signs of a significant change in their intentions or preparation for hostile action. Many signs of such activity, or the lack thereof, may be detected from a study of reconnaissance imagery. If coverage is timely and systematic, reliable conclusions concerning indications may be inferred by use of sampling techniques. The indicators extracted from the USIB General Indicator List (Attachment 1) provided a basis for determining those installations in the USSR and other communist countries which need to be sampled periodically. NPIC and NIC have extracted from the total COMIREX target list those targets where imagery may be expected to reveal indications of hostile intent. These targets comprise an Imagery Indicator Target List which is Attachment 2. This list will be revised annually unless events necessitate more frequent revision.

6. To date, coverage of indicator targets has been dictated by general requirements to obtain periodic coverage of the USSR and other communist countries. It has been assumed that if the periodicity requirements are met, the indicators will have been satisfactorily reviewed. Criteria for the general requirements that determine this periodic coverage will be improved in the near future. NIC, in conjunction with COMIREX, will develop sampling techniques to obtain imagery and permit statistically

1. COMIREX D-31.1/2 Guidelines for First- and Second-Phase Requirements for Reporting of Satellite Reconnaissance, 14 Oct 68, [redacted]
2. USIB General Indicator List, 25 Apr 69, SC 05728/69

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significant reporting of activity at indicator targets in specific functional categories. Information derived from this systematic sampling of targets can now be reliably related by the intelligence community to conclusions concerning Soviet intentions. Continued development and implementation of such techniques is essential because with the advent of [redacted] the volume of coverage acquired and the interpretation resources available may preclude the full exploitation of every target covered on a mission-by-mission basis.

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7. Present NPIC procedures for reporting of warning and indications information by preliminary OAK and OAK cables and by special cables appear to be adequate for all information expected from the present satellite imagery collection systems. In the event that information discovered should meet the criteria of CRITIC reporting, NPIC would transmit a high precedence message to the headquarters of USIB agencies.

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[redacted]
National Indications Center

[redacted]
ARTHUR C. LUNDAHL
Director

National Photographic Interpretation Center

Attachments:

1. Indication List for Imagery Interpretation
2. Imagery Indicator Target List, TS 200748/70

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